

**Alaska Wilderness League • American Rivers • Audubon • Defenders of Wildlife  
Friends of the Earth • Natural Resources Defense Council • Oceana  
The Ocean Conservancy • Physicians for Social Responsibility • Sierra Club  
The Wilderness Society • U.S. Public Interest Research Group**

March 16, 2005

**Re: Oppose H. Con. Res. 95, the FY 2006 Budget Resolution; support pro-environment alternatives**

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the millions of members of our organizations, we urge you to oppose H. Con. Res. 95, the FY 2006 budget resolution. Congress should invest the resources that are needed to protect the health of our communities and safeguard our natural resources for future generations. Unfortunately, the FY 2006 budget makes deep and disproportionate cuts to environmental and natural resource spending, threatening these programs for years to come.

The budget resolution cuts discretionary spending on environmental and natural resource programs \$2.85 billion below last year's level, a 9.1 percent cut. We appreciate the Budget Committee's decision to provide \$500 million more for clean water infrastructure and other environmental programs in the first year of the budget than proposed by the president. However, the significant, disproportionate and long-term cuts that the budget resolution proposes more than eclipse this small positive step. **By the final year of the committee's five-year budget, discretionary spending on the environment and natural resources would be cut 21 percent below the level needed to maintain current services.**

These punitive cuts threaten a wide range of programs that ensure the health of our communities and protect our natural resources. Among the programs that could be hardest hit are clean water infrastructure investments, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, oceans and coastal protection and agricultural conservation. **We urge you to support the Spratt (D-SC) alternative and the Obey (D-WI) amendment, both of which would restore needed funding for these critical priorities.**

In addition, we are concerned that the budget resolution could leave the door open to attempts to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Chairman Nussle's statement that Arctic drilling does not belong in the budget is an important first step. However, the budget's reconciliation instructions to the Resources Committee are a loophole that the Resources Committee could exploit to add Arctic drilling to reconciliation legislation despite the express intent of the Budget Committee chair.

Finally, while we are pleased that the budget resolution currently excludes unbalanced budget process changes that would further threaten environmental programs, we remain concerned that these proposals could be added to the budget on the floor or in conference. **We urge you to oppose a Hensarling (R-TX) amendment**, which would cut spending on the environment by an even greater amount than the committee mark and would lock these cuts in through budget process changes that unfairly target spending on the environment and other domestic priorities.

Congress should pass a responsible budget that protects public health and the environment. We appreciate the committee's decisions to restore some of the president's cuts to environmental

programs, to exclude an explicit assumption of revenues from drilling in the Arctic Refuge and to omit unbalanced budget process changes such as unrealistic multi-year spending caps. However, the budget's severe and long-term cuts to the environment far outweigh these small positive steps. We urge you to oppose the FY 2006 budget resolution.

Sincerely,

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